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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0814
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001004

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MUSTAFA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/09/2016
TAGS: [KPAL](#) [PGOV](#) [IS](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: EREKAT ON JERICHO DEMARCHE, USG ASSISTANCE, AND
CROSSINGS

REF: SECSTATE 29011

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Chris Stevens, per reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: PLO Chief Negotiator and PLC member Sa,eb Erekat told Consul General during a March 9 meeting that he feared the withdrawal of U.S./U.K. Jericho Monitoring Mission (JMM) personnel would negatively impact civilians living in Jericho if the GOI takes military action against the six detainees or tightens security restrictions on the city. Erekat urged the U.S. to carefully calibrate humanitarian assistance to Palestinians to support the goal of demonstrating HAMAS, inability to govern while minimizing Palestinian suffering. In regard to next steps with the Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA), Erekat promised to advocate pragmatism within the PA and make members of the Negotiation Support Unit (NSU) available to ConGen staff for preliminary discussions on a second Gaza-Israel crossing.
END SUMMARY.

JMM Demarche

¶2. (C) The Consul General provided Erekat with a copy of the joint U.S./U.K. letter to President Abbas on the JMM -- the original was delivered to Abu Mazen,s office on March 8 -- and informed him that the U.S. and U.K. planned to withdraw their monitors if the PA did not take immediate action to improve prison security and comply with the Jericho monitoring arrangements (reftel). Erekat said ending the monitoring mission was a &bad idea8 and civilians living in Jericho would likely be harmed by resulting IDF military action and tightened security restrictions on the city. Erekat predicted Abu Mazen would likely cave under pressure to release the Jericho detainees, resulting in IDF action to kill or apprehend them. Erekat requested USG assistance in attaining assurances from the GOI that they would not move against the six detainees if they remained in the prison and suggested -- with no apparent irony -- one possible solution would be to move the six detainees back to the Muqa,ata in Ramallah. Likewise, Erekat suggested ending the monitoring mission without receiving assurances from the GOI regarding the disposition of the detainees could be &bad for the security of the U.S. and Britain8 because PFLP and other militant factions would likely blame the U.S./U.K. for any IDF military actions against the detainees.

¶3. (C) Consul General responded PA non-compliance with the Jericho monitoring arrangements, failure to provide adequate security for the U.S./U.K. monitors, and the political activities of the detainees themselves had made the JMM &untenable.8 The PA could choose to comply with the

Jericho monitoring arrangements or come to a new understanding with the GOI regarding the disposition of the detainees, but the U.S. would no longer stand between the two sides.

USG Assistance to Palestinians

14. (C) Consul General briefed Erekat on the ongoing interagency review of USG assistance to Palestinians, explaining that all support after the formation of the new government would be "narrowly focused" on humanitarian assistance and channeled through NGOs and international organizations. Erekat said it would be important for the USG to emphasize the continuity of assistance to the Palestinian people, even after USG support for the PA stops. Erekat asked for special consideration for projects in his district and plans to build up Fatah-affiliated NGOs as a part of efforts to rebuild the movement.

15. (C) Erekat urged caution on predictions of a quick failure by the HAMAS-led government. HAMAS cares little for the welfare of the predominantly Fatah-affiliated Civil Service, whose salaries constitute the bulk of PA expenditures. Erekat emphasized that HAMAS is a Muslim Brotherhood organization and would not forfeit power easily, especially if Fatah refuses to give HAMAS an excuse for its failure to govern. Consul General replied that HAMAS would be hard pressed to raise the USD 150 million per month needed to meet governmental expenses, explaining the international community was pushing for a near-term confrontation with the HAMAS-led government to minimize Palestinian suffering.

Crossings

16. (C) With regard to next steps on the AMA, the Consul General told Erekat that the USG was anxious to begin the conversation about opening a second crossing between Gaza and Israel to create redundancy and facilitate the movement of goods. To that end, it was important that Interior Minister Nasir Yusif implement the USSC's draft plan to augment security measures at Karni crossing. Erekat said he would forward that message and promised to make Negotiation Support Unit (NSU) staff available to the ConGen to come up with ideas on opening a second crossing. While Abu Mazen has raised concerns about the viability of Kerem Shalom because of its limited capacity for processing trucks, Erekat said he would urge pragmatism so that we don't punish Gaza anymore.

STEVENS